

Appl. No.: 09/939,782
Amdt. Dated: August 29, 2005

Amendments to the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A delivery system for facilitating a transaction between a seller having a funds account and a purchaser having a funds account, wherein the seller has agreed to exchange one, or more, packages of goods for a payment from the purchaser, the delivery system comprising:

a delivery service system capable of delivering the package from a first location to an intermediate location and capable of receiving a hold command associated with the package and responsive to the hold command holding the package at the intermediate location pending receipt of a release command, and responsive to the release command releasing the package for delivery to the purchaser, wherein removal of the hold command is indicative of receipt of the payment associated with the package into escrow;

a payment system configured to receive the payment associated with the package from the purchaser's funds account, to hold the payment in escrow on receipt, to transmit payment verification information in response to receiving the payment in escrow and to distribute the payment from escrow to the seller's account in response to a distribution command, wherein receipt of the distribution command is indicative of delivery of the package to the purchaser; and

an information system configured to receive a request from one of the seller, purchaser [[and]] or delivery service system and configured to automatically transmit the hold command to the delivery service system responsive to the request and to receive the payment verification information from the payment system,

the information system also configured to transmit the release command to the delivery system in response to receiving the payment verification information thereby releasing the package for delivery to the purchaser when payment is made into escrow,

the information system further configured to receive a delivery verification information confirming delivery of the package to the purchaser and to transmit the distribution command to the payment system in response to receipt of the delivery verification information.

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2. (Previously Presented) A delivery system of Claim 1, wherein the delivery service system is capable of delivering the package to a purchaser designated location after releasing the package.

3. (Previously Presented) A delivery system of Claim 2, wherein the purchaser designated location is a purchaser location, and wherein the delivery service system is capable of transmitting the delivery verification information to the information system after delivery to the purchaser location.

4. (Cancelled)

5. (Previously Presented) A delivery system of Claim 3, wherein the systems are capable of electronically transmitting and receiving their respective information and commands.

6. (Original) A delivery system of Claim 1, wherein the first location is in a first country and the intermediate location is in a second country, and the delivery service system further comprises an export brokerage in the first country and an import brokerage in the second country.

7. (Original) A delivery system of Claim 6, wherein the export brokerage is capable of clearing export of the package out of the first country and the import brokerage is capable of clearing import of the package into the second country and holding the package at the intermediate location in response to the hold command.

8. (Previously Presented) A delivery system of Claim 7, wherein the delivery services system further includes a local delivery system that delivers the package from the intermediate location to a purchaser designated location.

9. (Previously Presented) A delivery system of Claim 8, wherein the purchaser designated location is a purchaser location and wherein the delivery service system is capable of transmitting the delivery verification information after delivery to the purchaser location.

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10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) A delivery system of Claim 9, wherein the systems are capable of electronically transmitting and receiving their respective information and commands.

12. (Original) A delivery system of Claim 1, further comprising a shipment order system that is configured to record shipment order information submitted by the seller and to transmit the shipment order information to the delivery service system.

13. (Original) A delivery system of Claim 12, wherein the shipment order information includes export and import information and wherein the delivery service system is configured to receive the shipment order information from the shipment order system and is capable of clearing export of the package out of a first country having the first location using the shipment information and import of the package into a second country having the intermediate location using the shipment information.

14. (Previously Presented) A delivery system of Claim 13, wherein the import and the export information includes at least one of a value-of-goods information, a transaction reference number or a currency of payment.

15. (Original) A delivery system of Claim 12, wherein the shipment order system is configured to transmit notification information to the purchaser in response to receiving the shipment order information.

16. (Original) A delivery system of Claim 15, wherein the notification information includes a description of the packaged goods and payment instructions.

17. (Original) A delivery system of Claim 16, wherein the payment system includes an account and wherein the payment instructions include an account identification number and an amount of the payment.

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18. (Original) A delivery system of Claim 15, wherein the information system includes a secure Internet site having payment instructions and wherein the notification information includes a description of the packaged goods and a link to the payment instructions on the secure Internet site.

19. (Original) A delivery system of Claim 18, wherein the payment system includes an account and wherein the payment instructions include an account identification number and an amount of the payment.

20. (Original) A delivery system of Claim 18, wherein the systems are capable of electronically transmitting and receiving their respective information and commands.

21. (Currently Amended) An international cash-on-delivery system for facilitating an international transaction between a seller having a funds account and a purchaser having a funds account, wherein the seller has agreed to exchange one, or more, packages of goods for a payment from the purchaser, and wherein the seller is in a first country having a first department of commerce and the purchaser is in a second country having a second department of commerce, the international cash-on-delivery system comprising:

an export service system capable of receiving a package shipment information and using the package shipment information to interact with the first department of commerce to clear export of the package out of the first country;

an import service system capable of receiving the package shipment information and using the package shipment information to interact with the second department of commerce to clear import of the package into the second country, the import service system responsive to a hold command associated with the package to hold the package pending receipt of a release command and responsive to the release command to release the package;

a local delivery system configured to receive the released package from the import service system, to deliver the package to the purchaser and to transmit a delivery verification information to the information system;

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a payment system configured to receive the payment associated with the package from the purchaser's funds account, to hold the payment in escrow pending receipt of a distribution command, to communicate payment verification information, and

further configured to distribute the payment to the seller's funds account in response to receipt of the distribution command; and

an electronic information system configured to receive the package shipment information from one of the seller [[and]] or the purchaser and to transmit the shipment information to the export service and the import service, the information system further configured to transmit the hold command to the import service system in response to receiving the package shipment information and prior to release of the package by the import service system, and to receive the payment verification information from the payment system indicating payment into escrow, the information system also configured to transmit the release command to the import service in response to receiving the payment verification information, and

further configured to transmit the distribution command to the payment system in response to receipt of the delivery verification information thereby controlling movement of the shipping information, the payment verification information and the package so as to complete the international transaction between the purchaser and the seller.

22-23. (Cancelled)

24. (Original) An international cash-on-delivery system of Claim 21, further comprising a shipment order system that is configured to record the shipment order information submitted by the seller and to transmit the shipment order information to the information system.

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25. (Previously Presented) A method of delivery for facilitating a transaction between a seller having a funds account and a purchaser having a funds account, wherein the seller has agreed to exchange one, or more, packages of goods for a payment from the purchaser, the method of delivery comprising:

receiving the package at a first location using a delivery system;

receiving shipment order information on the package using an information system;

responsive to receiving the shipment order information transmitting a hold command to the delivery system using the information system, said hold command associated with the package received at the first location, and instructing the delivery system to hold the package at an intermediate location pending receipt of a release command;

while the package is under the hold command, at least one of moving the package toward the intermediate location or holding the package at the intermediate location, using the delivery system;

receiving the payment associated with the package from the purchaser's funds account using a payment system, holding the payment in escrow and transmitting a payment verification to the information system;

in response to receiving the payment verification, transmitting the release command to the delivery system using the information system;

while the payment is held in escrow, releasing the hold command in response to the release command;

while the payment is held in escrow, delivering the package to a purchaser location after releasing the package and receiving a delivery verification at the information system; and

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transmitting a distribution command to the payment system using the information system response to receiving the delivery verification and distributing the payment out of escrow to the seller's funds account using the payment system.

26-27. (Cancelled)

28. (Previously Presented) A method of delivery of Claim 25, further comprising holding the package at the intermediate location using the delivery system in response to the hold command, and

clearing the package for export from the first location using an export brokerage of the delivery system and clearing the package for import to the intermediate location using an import brokerage of the delivery system before moving the package to the intermediate location.

29. (Previously Presented) A method of delivery of Claim 28, wherein delivery of the package to the purchaser location includes using a local delivery system of the delivery system after releasing the package.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Previously Presented) A method of delivery of Claim 25, further comprising recording shipment order information using a shipment order system and transmitting the shipment order information to the delivery system.

32. (Previously Presented) A method of delivery of Claim 31, further comprising holding the package at the intermediate location using the delivery system in response to the hold command, and

wherein the shipment order information includes export and import information and further comprising clearing the package for export from the first location using the export information and clearing the package for import to the intermediate location using the import information before moving the package to the intermediate location.

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33. (Original) A method of delivery of Claim 31, further comprising transmitting notification information to the purchaser using the shipment order system after receiving the shipment order information.

34. (Original) A method of delivery of Claim 33, wherein the notification information includes a description of the package and a link to payment instructions on a secure Internet site of the information system.

35. (Currently Amended) An electronic information system for coordinating delivery of a package, or packages, of goods by a seller using a delivery service system and payment for the package by a purchaser using a payment system, the information system comprising:

a request system capable of receiving requests from one of the seller, the purchaser [[and]] or the delivery service system requesting coordination of the delivery of, and payment for, the package, and

configured to instruct the delivery service system to deliver the package during a non-guaranteed payment delivery stage, and

the request system also configured to transmit a coordination request verification;

a hold system capable of receiving the verification of the coordination request and automatically transmitting a hold request associated with the package to the delivery service system prior to release of the package from an intermediate location and in response to receipt of the verification of the coordination request, the hold request requesting the delivery service system to hold the package at the intermediate location pending receipt of a release request; and

a release system capable of receiving a payment verification transmitted by the payment system, the payment verification verifying payment into escrow by the purchaser for the package, and the release system capable of transmitting the release request to the delivery system in response to receipt of the payment verification, the release request requesting the delivery service system to release the package for delivery to the purchaser

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wherein delivery to the purchaser occurs during a guaranteed payment delivery stage, and

wherein delivery during the non-guaranteed delivery stage is to the intermediate location and delivery during the guaranteed delivery stage is from the intermediate location to the purchaser,

said release system further capable of transmitting a delivery notification to the payment system, said delivery notification indicating delivery of the package to the purchaser and configured to trigger payment of the seller for the package by the payment system.

36. (Currently Amended) An electronic information system for coordinating delivery of a package, or packages, of goods by a seller using a delivery service system and payment for the package by a purchaser, the information system comprising:

a request system capable of receiving requests from one of the seller, the purchaser [[and]] or the delivery service system requesting coordination of the delivery of, and payment for, the package, the request system also configured to transmit a coordination request verification;

a hold system capable of receiving the verification of the coordination request and automatically transmitting a hold request to the delivery service system in response to receipt of the verification of the coordination request and prior to release of the package from an intermediate location for delivery to the purchaser, the hold request requesting the delivery service system to hold the package at the intermediate location pending notification of a release request;

a payment system capable of receiving payment associated with the package from a funds account of the purchaser, holding the payment in escrow a notification of delivery of the package to the purchaser and transmitting the payment verification in response to receipt of the payment from the funds account of the purchaser,

said payment system further capable of distributing funds to a funds account of the seller in response to the notification of delivery of the package to the purchaser;

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a release system capable of receiving the payment verification transmitted by the account system and verifying payment by the purchaser for the package, the release system capable of transmitting the release request to the delivery service system in response to receipt of the payment verification, the release request requesting the delivery service system to release the package for delivery to the purchaser; and

a delivery notification system capable of notifying the payment system of receipt of the package by the purchaser.

37. (Currently Amended) A delivery system for facilitating a transaction between a seller having a funds account and a purchaser having a funds account, wherein the seller has agreed to exchange one, or more, packages of goods for a payment from the purchaser, the delivery system comprising:

a delivery service system capable of delivering the package from a first location to an intermediate location, and from the intermediate location to a purchaser designated location,

a delivery service communication system configured to receive and transmit information for said delivery service;

said delivery service system responsive to a hold command received via said delivery service communication system to hold the package at the intermediate location pending receipt of a release command and also responsive to the release command received via said delivery service communication system to release the package for delivery of the package to the purchaser designated location, said delivery service communication system being further capable of transmitting delivery verification information after delivery of the package by the delivery service to the purchaser designated location;

a payment system configured to receive and hold in escrow the payment associated with the package from the purchaser's funds account pending receipt of a distribution command and to transmit payment verification information in response to receipt of the payment,

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said payment system further configured to distribute the payment to the seller's account in response to the distribution command; and

a control system electronically connected to the delivery service communication system and the payment system via at least one electronic network, said control system configured to receive requests from one of the seller, purchaser [[and]] or delivery service and automatically transmit the hold command over the network to the delivery service in response to the requests and prior to release of the package from the intermediate location, said control system further configured to receive the payment verification information over the network from the payment system and transmit the release command over the network to the delivery service in response to receiving the payment verification information, and said control system further configured to transmit the distribution command to the payment system in response to receipt of the delivery verification information.

38. (Previously Presented) A hub and spoke system of computers for controlling delivery of a package via a carrier from a seller to a purchaser, and for controlling payment for the package by the purchaser to the seller from a funds account controlled by a purchaser bank computer, the system comprising:

a facilitator computer having a data memory comprising one or more memory storage areas, said facilitator computer being configured as a hub for communication with a plurality of spoke computers, the spoke computers comprising:

an order entry computer,

a carrier computer, and

an escrow bank computer,

the facilitator computer being adapted to communicate with said spoke computers to:

electronically receive, from the order entry computer, a request to facilitate delivery of, and payment for, the package, and shipment order information associated

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with the request, and store at least a portion of said request and said shipment order information in the data memory;

electronically receive a notice that transportation of the package from a source location toward an intermediate location is under a package escrow command requesting holding of the package at the intermediate location pending a verification of payment into an escrow account from the purchaser's funds account and update said data memory based on the notice that the package is in transit;

electronically receive, from the escrow bank computer, the payment escrow verification indicating payment into the escrow account from the purchaser's funds account for the package and update said data memory based on the escrow payment verification;

responsive to the payment escrow verification, electronically transmit to the carrier computer a release command terminating the package escrow command and allowing transport of the package beyond the intermediate location to the destination location;

electronically receive, from the carrier computer, a delivery verification and update said data memory based on the delivery verification; and

responsive to the delivery verification, electronically transmit a distribution command to the escrow bank computer causing transfer of the payment from the escrow account to a funds account of the seller.

39. (Original) A hub and spoke computer system of Claim 38, wherein the shipment order information includes the destination location for the package, a tracking number for the package, a transaction amount and seller identifier from the order entry system computer, wherein the verification of payment includes a verification of payment of at least the transaction amount, wherein the delivery verification includes receiving notice of detection of the tracking number from the carrier computer and wherein transfer of the payment to the funds account of the seller includes transfer of at least the transaction amount.

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40. (Original) A hub and spoke computer system of Claim 38, wherein the facilitator computer is configured to receive the notice that the package is in transit from the order entry system.

41. (Original) A hub and spoke computer system of Claim 40, wherein the facilitator computer is configured to electronically transmit to the carrier computer the package escrow command subsequent to receipt of the shipment order information, the package escrow command preventing transport of the package beyond the intermediate location which is prior to the destination location.

42. (Previously Presented) A method of Claim 25, wherein receiving the package includes receiving delivery information associated with the package and wherein receiving the shipment order information includes receiving a request to hold the package at the intermediate location pending payment into escrow.

43. (Previously Presented) A method of Claim 42, wherein receiving the package is performed prior to receiving the shipment order information.

44. (Previously Presented) A method of Claim 42, wherein the request to hold the package is generated automatically subsequent to receiving the delivery information.

45. (Previously Presented) A method of Claim 42, wherein the request to hold the package is received from the seller.